1. Introduction

Environmental conditions and human health in the U.S.-Mexico border area are influenced to a significant degree by the quality of the available water sources. Many waterways, some originating in Mexico and others in the U.S., flow across or along the binational border. Most of the border region is arid. Shared rivers, aquifers and marine resources are extremely valuable. Population in urban areas along the border has increased significantly over the past few years, influenced by the expansion of the maquiladora industry and relocation of industries from both countries to the area, resulting in an increase in jobs.

The area of concern covers surface water quality and public health issues within the border limits of the United States-Mexico covering the States of California (U.S.), Baja California (Mexico), Arizona (U.S.), Sonora (Mexico), New Mexico (U.S.), Chihuahua (Mexico), Texas (U.S.), Coahuila, (Mexico), Nuevo Leon (Mexico), and Tamaulipas (Mexico).

Along the border, economic activity and population have continued to grow rapidly. However, water and wastewater infrastructure has not kept up, resulting in a deterioration in surface water quality and an increase in the incidence of waterborne diseases. This report summarizes the water quality and public health conditions along the border and evaluates the need and effect of providing an adequate water and wastewater infrastructure for the border area. The report also provides an analysis of the accomplishments of a binational, multi-agency working group. Finally, the report looks at the future water and wastewater infrastructure needed to protect the water environment and serve communities of the border area through the year 2020.